The Devout Votaries.

A

SERMON

Preach'd at

Bramſton in *Rutland*,

AT THE

CHURCHING

OF A

Man and his Wife.

By *Henry Cornwaleys.*

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To my Friend Dr. Br. *of* Leiceſter.

SIR,

YOU were pleaſed to promiſe me when I Lived in *Leiceſterſhire*, that if it pleaſed God Almighty to Viſit me with Sickneſs, you would give me your advice *Gratis*, which tho' I then had no occaſion to make uſe of, yet to ſhew my Gratitude give me leave to put up this Prayer to the Throne of God for you, *May you Cure more by your Skill, then the Mountebanks Kill for want of it.*

To my worthy Friends E. R. *and his Wife.*

THE Sermon I Preach'd at your publick appearance at God's Houſe to render him your due thanks for his Mercies; I now preſent to you with this Prayer, *That you may be ever ſenſible of God's Mercies, and that he may bleſs you both in this World and that which is to come.*

Pſalm CXVI. 9.

Thou haſt delivered mine Eyes from Tears, and my Feet from falling; therefore will I walk before thee in the Land of the living.

IT having pleaſed the Great God, to whom belong the Iſſues of Life and Death to ſhew his Mercy to a Family in this Pariſh by a double Deliverance, in giving Health to Husband and Wife that were both at the ſame time Sick, the one of a *Feaver*, and the other in her Child-bed; for which Mercy they are now come Publickly to Church to return their Thanks to Almighty God.

To make them ſenſible of theſe Mercies, I have made choice of this place of Scripture, which Teaches us this Plain Doctrine.

I. That when it ſhall pleaſe God Almighty to deliver us from any Danger, whether Outwardly from the Rage of Enemies, or Inwardly from any Sickneſs to proceed from Ill-Humours of the Body, the leaſt we can do is to Conſecrate this New Life to him, who hath given us a new Being; and ſpend your Health and Strength in his Service that hath reſtor'd you to Health, and gave you a new Being in the Land of the living:

I ſhall apply this Doctrine.

1*ſt*. To all in General.

2*dly*. In particular, to thoſe Perſons that are come to make their Publick Acknowledgment for the Mercies they have receiv'd at God's Hands.

To all in General.

Men, Brethren, and Fathers, *Old Men and Maids*, *Young Men and Children*, liſten to this Doctrine; for I Preach it to you all, that are capable of Underſtanding. There is none of you, but have receiv'd Mercies from God; and the leaſt you can do, is to acknowledge them, and to ſpend you

your *Lives* in his Service from whom we received them.

Beneficium poſtulat Officium, Mercy calls for Duty; and Beneficence obligeth to Obedience. For this Reaſon no doubt it is, that God compares his Favour to the Cords of a Man, and Bonds of Love to ſhew unto us, that he gives them to draw us the nearer, and bind us the faſter to him. And St. *Paul* tells us, *Rom.* 2. 4. That it is the End why God beſtows his Mercies upon us, that the Marks of his Goodneſs might lead us to Repentance. And St. *Paul* beſeeching the *Romans*, that they *ſhould offer up their Bodies a living Sacrifices to God*: with this Argument, *I beſeech you by the Mercies of God*: plainly intimating to us, that the Mercies of God ought to be remembred by us as a Motive to ſerve him the more Chearfully. And *Zachary*, in his *Magnificat* aſſerteth this to be the very End of our Deliverance from our Enemies, *that we might ſerve him without fear in righteouſneſs and holineſs before him, all the days of our Life.* And *David* promiſeth thus much in the Words of my Text; *Thou haſt delivered mine Eyes from Tears, and my*

Feet

Feet from falling; therefore will I walk before the Lord, in the Land of the Living.

Let what I have ſaid from this Text, cauſe every one of us to ſearch our Hearts and call an Audit in our own Breaſts; and without all doubt, we ſhall find, that we have experienced variety of Mercies, nay many of us like theſe Perſons have received deliverance from the danger of Death.

Let us then enquire what Service extraordinary have we paid to our Maker, have we gone to his Houſe with praiſes? renounced the Sins of our former Life, and vowed to God new Obedience? rather have we not like the Earth that drinketh up the Rain, inſtead of Herbs brought Thorns to the Dreſſer.

Perhaps in the Day of your Diſtreſs you went to God, but ſince the day of your Deliverance, you ran from him like *Antigonus*'s Soldier, when ſickly was Valiant, when recovered was a Coward, like *Æſops*'s Snake which lay ſtill in the Froſt, but ſtung him ſeverely who warmed it in his Boſom; ſo indeed it is with moſt of us in Adverſity; we ſeem devout,

but

but in Prosperity licentious. I have read that in the Tomb of *Terentia* were found certain Lamps burning under ground many Ages, but so soon as they were brought into the Air they went out never to be kindled again, a fit Emblem of our practice while we are kept in the Cave of Darkness confined to a Vault of Misery, we are burning and shining Lamps, but when God hath lifted us up from the Gates of Death, and carry'd us as it were into the open Air, and we enjoy again this World's allurements, the Light of Piety goeth out, and we practice the Works of Darkness. *But do you thus requite the Lord, O foolish People and unwise.*

Suppose God Almighty should this Night require your Souls, as he did the Fools in the Gospel, what Answer could you make him in the great day of your Accounts, for the forgetfulness of these his Mecies? *Had* he taken you away in your last Sickness, you might then have pleaded, *O Lord, hadst thou restored me to my Health, I had lived a better Life, I repented of all my Sins on my sick Bed, but took then away my life and gave me no*

opportunity to ſerve thee; but now God Almighty have tried you a little longer and recover'd thee from thy Sickneſs, what excuſe can you make for your ſelf? do but imagine thy ſelf ſtanding at God's Tribunal, his Mercy and thy Iniquities ſet in order before thy Face, and think thou heareſt God upbraiding thee in words much like to thoſe by *Nathan* and *David*.

I have many a time delivered you from great dangers, and have given thee Wife and Children, with many other Bleſſings, and if that had been too little, I would have given ye ſuch and ſuch things: Wherefore haſt thou deſpiſed my Command, diſhonoured my Name, abuſed my Mercies, returned me Evil for Good, and Hatred for my good Will.

I will now therefore cut thee off from the Land of the Living, and make thee an eternal Monument of my Fury, who was ſo late a living Object of my Mercy. And thus much for all in general, but particularly to thoſe that have been delivered from any ſickneſs.

I ſhall now in the Second place in a more particular manner addreſs my ſelf

elf to thoſe two Perſons that are come o return publick Thanks for the Mer ies hey have received at Gods Hands.

I ſhall begin firſt with the Husband, nd my Advice to him ſhall be,

1*ſt*. Beware of *Aſa*'s Sin; look not ſo much to the Skill of the Phyſician, or thy Friends, as to leave God out of the Cure; for believe this to be an undoubted Truth, Whatſoever was the means, God was the giver of the Health: Behold therefore the Phyſician as God's Hand to reach thee Health; thy Friends as Eyes to look to thee in thy Sickneſs; but believe God to be the Head to thoſe Eyes, Arms, and Hands, by which thou receiveſt Health: Eye them both with due Reſpect, give thy Nurſe and thy Phyſitian thy Love, as they have been Inſtruments of thy Health; but give God the Glory, without whom thou couldſt not have obtain'd it. Give not Man the Glory, leſt thou bleſs an Idol for thy Cure: Take not due Thanks from thy Friends, leaſt thou prove thy ſelf a Thief; do Right to both, that thou be neither Robber, nor Idolator.

2*dly*.

2*dly*. Thou art now Recover'd; but every Day expect another Sickneſs, and that may carry thee off. The Cock in the *Arabick* Fable; having overcome another Cock in Battel, thought now he had no Enemies, and gat to the top of an Houſe, and began to clap his Wings in token of Victory: When behold, on a ſudden a Vulture cometh and ſnatcheth away this braging Champion, and conquer'd him. But to apply this to you: If Nature was ſo ſtrong as to maſter the laſt Diſtemper, it gives you not leave to be ſecure; for ſome outward Accident, or inward Diſtemper may maſter you; and while you dream of living many Years, may ſend you when you little think of it, to your Long Home.

3*dly*. You are now Recover'd; and now mayſt diſcover how unfit a time a Sick-bed is to Repent in: O how unfit to make his Peace with God, when his Sickneſs takes away both his Senſe and Speech! O by no means truſt to it: For what if it be ſudden, and take away Time; what if it be diſtracted, and take away Wit; or curſed, and take away Grace? This is

a

true Rule, Too ſoon you cannot Re-
ent; to late you may. Truſt not then
no means to it.

4*thly*. Thou art Recover'd; and from
lling to the Grave, art rais'd off thy
d to walk among thy Neighbours.
nd now ſeeing God hath given thee an
ſtate of two Lives, one by thy Birth
om the Womb of Darkneſs, the other
om the Bed of Sickneſs; what canſt
ou do leſs than to give him thy Service
hich thou oweſt to him by a double O-
igation both of his Precept, and your
eſervation in this Life. *Eccl.* 5. 4. *Pay
leaſt once what thou oweſt thrice, leſt
ou incur a tripple Penalty, of an Undu-
ful, Unthankful, and Unfaithful Per-
n.*

But leaving the Husband, I come now
Addreſs my ſelf to the Wife, who is
w come to return thanks for her ſafe
eliverance from the great Danger of
hild-birth. And my Advice to her ſhall
this.

1*ſt*. Content not your ſelf with this
blick Acknowledgment at the Church;

but

but live a Life of Praiſe and Thankfulneſs; and be always ſenſible of the greatneſs of your Deliverance: which is ſo great, that the Church takes notice of it, and Commands a publick Thankſgiving to be made for it to God Almighty: For we muſt acknowledge it to be an Act of Almighty Power to preſerve a weak Woman and a weaker Infant in the midſt of ſo many great Pains and Perils: Some have loſt their Underſtanding; Some their Senſes; ſome the uſe of their Limbs: And now ſeeing you have eſcap'd theſe Puniſhments; what can you do leſs than make publick Thankſgiving.

You may read *Æſter* the 6. 12, 13 when *Ahaſuerus could not ſleep one Night he commanded the Records, to be brought unto him*; and finding how Inſtrumental *Mordecai* the *Jew* had been in delivering him from the Treaſon of his Chamberlains, he preſently cries out, What Honour hath been done to *Mordecai* for this Deliverance? And immediately cauſed the beſt Robes to be put upon him, and that the greateſt Honour ſhould be given to him, that a Subject was capable of. Now I argue this; If he did ſo great

Honour

Honour a poor *Jew*, that ſav'd his Life. more perhaps out of Intereſt than Love; how greatly ought you to Praiſe not a wandring *Jew*, but an Almighty God, that has lately ſav'd your Life, not out of Intereſt, but pure Love.

If you refuſe ſo ſlender an Homage as this; may not God beſpeak you, as *David* did *Nabal*, *Surely in vain have I kept this Fellow in the Wilderneſs, ſo that nothing is loſt: See how he rewards me Evil for Good.*

May not God by his Miniſter thus beſpeak you, In vain, have I deliver'd this Woman from the great Danger of Childbearing: See how ſhe requites me! refuſing to ſpend the Life I gave her in my Service. Do but conſider the Prayer that the Miniſter put up for you, when you came to be Churched: And did not you joyn with him in this Prayer: *Grant, O Lord, that ſhe thro' thy Grace, may both faithfully live, and walk according to thy Will in this Life preſent.*

So that if you endeavour not to live a good Life after this great Deliverance, what do you but mock God in your Seat, and tell him a Lye in your Prayers.

Beſides,

Beſides, This may be a means
cauſe God Almighty to bleſs your Of
ſpring, and ſhew Favour to the Chi
that you have brought into the World
For how often do's the Devotion of t
Parent entail a Bleſſing on the Chil
And as St. *Ambroſe* ſaid of *Monica*, t
Mother of St. *Auſtin*, *The Child of*
many Prayers cannot miſcarry. So may
apply it to you; if you would have Go
bleſs your Child, firſt bleſs him by yo
Prayers and Thankfulneſs.

Something now by way of Improve
ment.

Have any of you receiv'd any Benef
by the Prayers of the Church, when yo
put up your Ticket to the Miniſter t
Pray for your Health, imitate theſe Per
ſons, the firſt Opportunity you have
come like them to the Church, and mak
this pablick Acknowledgment of th
Mercy.

Now that you may not want Motive
to this Duty.

1. Con

1. Consider that the Church and Congregation have a right to demand it of you, since you did intereſt them in their Prayers to God for you, and it would be an injury to the Holy Society to defraud them of an opportunity of Praiſing God on that behalf, ſince they joyntly put up their Requeſts to the Throne of Grace for you, and then by your ingratitude hinder them of returning thanks to God for the Mercies you received at his Hand.

2. Conſider your ſo doing will be an encouragement to others to make their Returns and Praiſe in the like manner, ſo there will be frequent occaſion adminiſtred to the Congregation to ſing their Hallelujahs, making the Church like another Heaven daily reſounding and eccho-ing forth the Praiſes and Glory of the Lord moſt high.

3. 'Tis a part of the Publick Service of the Church which we ſhould willingly make uſe of on all occaſions. Now that 'tis the part of the Publick Worſhip of the Church may be proved from the Clauſe inſerted in the general Thankſgiving,

ing,

ing, *Particularly for all thoſe that deſir to return Praiſes for the mercy receive* And now that 'tis meant for thoſe tha have by the Prayers of the Church bee recovered from Sickneſs, the Church e pounds her own meaning in the ſam Thankſgiving in theſe Words; this is be uſed when any that have been pray for, deſires to return thanks, which plai ly ſhows, that 'tis part of the Publi Worſhip, and ought not to be omitte Nay, our Saviour Chriſt takes notice the Omiſſion of it, for you may re when he had healed ten Lepers, nine them were ſo ingrateful to forget t Mercy, one only of them came to retu Publick Thanks, which made him t notice of the ingratitude of the other ni in theſe words, *Were there not ten clea ed, but where are the nine?*

But alas! how far ſhort do we fall him, when I believe that there is not o in Five hundred that come to Church, a publickly return their Thankſgiving the Mercies they have received, *This a Lamentation, yea, and ſhall be for Lamentation*, as the Prophet ſpeaketh.

Thus much for the Benefit you may receive by the Man's giving his Publick Thanks in the Church.

Now the Benifit you may receive by the Womans returning her Publick Thanks.

1. Concerning all in general. 2. All Mothers. 3. Children.

1. Then let the reading of this Office engage the whole Congregation to joyn in Prayers for their too much forgotten Mercy in their ſeveral Births, for tho the Woman appear in a diſtinct Veil, yet every one here preſent have a freſh occaſion to Exerciſe his moſt ſerious Thoughts in recollecting the Miracle of his own entrance into the World, that you were not Strangled in the Womb, but remain in this World a living object of God's Mercy.

I am now come to addreſs my ſelf to thoſe Perſons whoſe Mothers are yet alive, and I muſt tell them they can never enough love that Woman that brought them with ſo much Pain into the World; a danger ſo great, that the Church hath commanded a Publick Thdnkſgiving for

it: And ſurely then you ought to be for ever ſenſible of the great hazard ſhe run to bring you into the World, and ventured her own Life to give you Birth; and after you were born to continue to love you ſo well, that God Almighty is pleaſed to expreſs his Love to his People by the love a Woman hath to her Child: *Can a Mother forget her ſucking Child.*

And we alſo find *Lev.* 18. 20. this Command from God Almighty, *You ſhall love every one his Mother and his Father.* I hope it will not be counted falſe Doctrine, if I give this Gloſs on that place of Scripture, the Mother is there placed firſt, becauſe ſhe ought to be the firſt in the Childs Affection, having ventured her Life ſo greatly to bring her Child into the World. Now can you kick againſt naked Bowels, and rebel againſt ſo great Love; is it not enough, nay is it not to much that you were ſo great a Pain to them when you were born, but will renew a burthen to them while you live: you muſt needs believe this to be unnatural and very ungrateful.

I am come to Addreſs my ſelf to you that are Mothers, eſpecially to all thoſe who

who God Almighty hath bleſſed with Children that are now alive, and my Advice to all Mothers ſhall be, that they take eſpecial care of their Off-ſpring, and not to let their Child's Soul be loſt that coſt them ſo dear to bring into the World, for, *fiunt non naſcuntur Chriſtiani*, Men are made and not born Chriſtians, and tho' they be born within the Pale of the Church, yet if they be not Educated in the Chriſtian Religion, they may be in a worſe condition than the Heathens.

I ſhall conclude this Diſcourſe with a Prayer that I ſhall adviſe all Mothers to uſe while they are with Child.

O *Bleſſed Jeſu, Son of the Almighty God, who according to thy Humanity was born of a Virgin, who conceived Thee without Sin, and brought Thee forth without Pain, have mercy upon me thy humble Servant; and as by thy bleſſing I have conceived, ſo grant that by thy favourable aſſiſtance, I may be ſafely delivered. Lord grant me Patience and Strength, and Confidence in Thee, and ſend thy Holy Angel to be my Guardian in the hour of my Travail.*

vail. I alſo humbly beg merey for my Child, that it may be born of a right ſhape, comely Body, and an underſtanding Soul, Life and opportunity of Baptiſm, and thy Grace from the Cradle to the Grave, that it may increaſe the number of Glorified Saints that Sing perpetually, Hallelujahs to Thee in the higheſt Heavens. Amen.

1. *Lord I am ſick, ſo thy beſt Saints have been,* Lazarus *thy Friend,* Dorcas *thy dear Diſciple, poor* Lazarus *was all Sores, rich* Job *all Boils,* Hezekiah *chazer'd like a Crane,* David *was like a Pelican: I am no better than my Fathers; why ſhould I then complain of my Sickneſs.*

2. *I am Sick, and in danger to Dye; ſo muſt all as well as I: If I be now in thy Favour, let me Dye now, leſt I Live to loſe it, and Dye in thy Diſpleaſure. Grant me thy Favour, and welcome Death.*

3. *Lord, I am Sick, and in great Pain; ſo was my dear Saviour; but what is my Bed to his Croſs? What is my Bitterneſs, to his Cup? What are my Groans to his Cries? What is my dewy Sweat to his Agony?*

Agony? What is my Pain to his Paſſion for my Sins? O Let me ſee thee on the Croſs, that I may ſuffer what I feel with Patience; becauſe thou ſuffer'd more for Sin, that never knew any Sin, than I that have greatly offended God by my Wickedneſs.

4. Lord, I am Sick in my Body; but let my Heart be Sound in thy Truth, that I be not ſeduc'd; ſound in thy Fear, that I be not over tempted; ſound in thy Peace, that I be not over-troubled; that neither Man nor Devil, Fleſh nor World delude or deprave me.

5. Lord, I am Sick; ſo are Millions at this inſtant as much as I; and thouſands more; and were I the moſt afflicted, what is the pain of my Body to the Sin of my Soul, what is my Bed to Hell, my Wo to the Worm, my Feaver to Hell-fire, what is all my momentany Grief to that Infinite and Eternal Pain. Lord, how great is thy Mercy, in that thou ſendeſt Sickneſs upon me, when Hell-fire is my Deſert.

And

And now, Lord, in these humble and holy Thoughts, I lay my Life down at thy Feet, and leave my Soul in thy Hands. Look upon me, O God, and take care of me; appoint the Angels to be my keepers, and thy self my Physician, and the Blood of Jesus, my Remedy; Let me lie, and rest and sleep in him this Night, and as long as I live, O God of my Life, I beseech thee for Jesus Christ's sake, thy Son, and my Saviour. Amen.

Meditations on Recovery.

I Am Recover'd, O Lord, but whoso ever was the Man, thou wert th God of my Health, to Thee therefore lone do I give the praise.

2. I am Recover'd; but of those Mil ons at the same time Sick, how ma are Dead, Of thousands brought to Be of the same Disease, how many Bury of better Life before thee, than I ha been, For this thy singular Merc make me humbly sensible, O Lo (even that I am alive) that as long

ve; I may be thankful for my Life.

3. I am Recover'd, O Lord, but yet hen thy Day, and my Hour come, I muſt ye, and long it cannot be: Let me not en miſpend the Minutes of remaining me on vile and vain things; but redeem hat was loſt in Luſt to ſerve to thy Hour and my Happineſs; that I may for ver be bleſſed.

4. Lord, I am Recovered, but not to n; but to ſerve thee; Thou haſt made e whole, let me ſin no more, leſt a worſe ing befall me. Some grievous Diſtemr in the Body, or more fearful Sickneſs the Soul; a ſick Body or a ſeared art; if when thou lookeſt for amendent for my Health, I make a relapſe to n: And what can I expect in Juſtice, t ſince my Sick-bed hath made me no ter, Death may make my next Bed, and ngeance lay me in that deadly Sleep, m which I ſhall not hope or joy to ake.

5. I am Recover'd, O Lord, but what my Health to Heaven, where the Soul

is

is without all possibility of Sin, and the Body of Sickness; where the Body shall not need to feed or sleep, nor fear to be diseas'd or griev'd from any ill Humours or Accidents.

O let me neglect no Earthly Medicine to procure this Heavenly Health.

I shall conclude with this Prayer.

O *Lord, God of my Health and Sickness, who hath given thy Servant a present Health of Body for Sickness: Receive my Thanks and bless the Resolutions which I mak; and harken to the Prayers which I pray befor thee; That when the Sickness come that will be my Death, my Repentance may give me a recovery of that Paradise which by* Adam's *Sin was lost and brought Sickness and Death on all his Posterity by the Loss: Grant this for Jesus Christ his sa e.* Amen.

Taken out of *Broughton's* Devotions.

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